SPANISH MEMOIRS;

IN A

SERIES OF ORIGINAL LETTERS.

VOL. I.

3 L k
13

SPANISH MEMOIRS;

IN A

SERIES OF ORIGINAL LETTERS.

CONTAINING THE

HISTORY

OF

DONNA ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA,

NIECE TO DON JOHN, TWENTIETH AND LAST DUKE OF ARANDINA.

Publiſhed by the AUTHOR *of*

MARIA, OR THE GENEROUS RUSTIC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Sad mournful preſage of her future years,
The child of miſery baptiz'd in tears.
LANGHORNE.

LONDON:
Printed for C. ELLIOT, T. KAY, and Co.
No 332, oppoſite Somerſet-Houſe, Strand, London;
And C. ELLIOT, Edinburgh.

M;DCC,LXXXVII.

11

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

LADY L***M

OF THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND,

ARE THESE

MEMOIRS

INSCRIBED,

BY HER

LADYSHIP'S

VERY FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

DURING my residence on the Continent, I was so fortunate as to contract an acquaintance with the present Bishop

Biſhop of M—o, who was for many years ſuperior of the Scots College at Seville. To that amiable man I am indebted for the following letters; which were diſcovered by him, during his reſidence in Seville, at the bottom of an old cheſt, which ſtood in a deſerted and traditionally haunted room in the attic ſtory of the College.

THE letters were tranſcribed into a book that was bound in vellum, and in good condition.

From

From the date of the Preface which is prefixed to them, they appear to have been *collected* at the close of the last century. At what time they were *written*, it is impossible now to determine; though probably about the year 1671, as about that time the dukedom of Arandina became extinct by the death of Don John twentieth and last Duke.

The author of the Preface which is prefixed to these letters seems to have been well acquainted

acquainted with the hiſtory of the houſe of Arandina; and it is by no means improbable, that Father Alberto, who makes ſo important a figure through the whole of the hiſtory, was the perſon who thus preſerved it.

HAD theſe pages been the production of a later period, I ſhould have been led to ſuppoſe, that the character of Alberto had been copied from that of the Biſhop of M——, whoſe many amiable qualities,

and

and diſtinguiſhed talents, have inſured to him the reſpect and eſteem of all who are ſo fortunate as to rank in the number of his acquaintance. Nor can I lay down my pen without expreſſing the ſatisfaction with which I embrace this opportunity of teſtifying my reſpect for that truly amiable man; whoſe virtues would reflect honour on the higheſt ſtation, and whoſe piety would adorn any communion.

How

How far the Editor has acted with propriety in availing himself of the permiſſion to print theſe letters, will be determined by the public; to whoſe inſpection they are now reſpectfully ſubmitted.

MEMOIRS

PREFIXED TO THE

LETTERS,

BY THE

PERSON WHO COLLECTED THEM.

DONNA Iſabella della Villarea was the only fruit of an unfortunate marriage. Her father was the younger brother of Don John, twentieth and laſt Duke of Arandina, and grandee of the firſt order. Don Frederick, the father of Iſabella, at

an early period of his life, became ſtrongly attached to Donna Eliza, daughter of Don Carlos de Ulloa, a grandee of the ſecond claſs.

The narrowneſs of Don Frederick's fortune retarded for a long time his union with Donna Eliza. At length, wearied with the frequent diſappointments he experienced, and not ſeeing any appearances in his favour, he determined no longer to defer the completion of his happineſs. He had, indeed, repeatedly applied to his brother for aſſiſtance; but the only anſwer which he obtained from the Duke was, that younger brothers had better not marry. Don Frederick now ſtated his caſe to Donna Eliza;

Eliza; who heroically preferred a *cottage* with Don Frederick, to a palace with the Duke of Caſtillo Neuovo, who at that time paid his addreſſes to her.

Don Frederick was ſoon bleſſed with the hand of Donna Eliza; whilſt the family of Ulloa, incenſed to the laſt degree at the ſtep ſhe had taken, determined never more to ſee her.

Meantime, Frederick and Eliza retired to a ſmall farm he had purchaſed in the province of Andaluſia; where, for ſome months, they experienced a ſtate of uninterrupted felicity; to which, however, a pe-

riod was at length put by the villany of the Duke of Caſtillo Neuovo: for one night, as Don Frederick was returning home totally unattended, the Duke, aided by a party of *bravos*, attacked him. Don Frederick defended himſelf with the utmoſt valour; and, after diſpatching the Duke and two of the villains, ſunk, covered with wounds, and expired. The remainder of the party inſtantly retired with the body of the Duke, whilſt that of Don Frederick was ſoon after found by ſome peaſants and carried home. The firſt perſon who encountered the mournful proceſſion was Donna Eliza. The ſcene that enſued is too horrible for deſcription. Suffice it to ſay,

that

that in a few hours Iſabella was born, and her mother recovered by ſlow degrees from that phrenſy into which the death of Don Frederick had driven her. Donna Eliza continued in her retirement in Andaluſia, where ſhe indulged her melancholy, by ſpending great part of each day at the monument which ſhe had reared over the duſt of her beloved Lord. In this manner had five years elapſed, when Donna Eliza found herſelf ſeized with a fever, which ſhe was aſſured would prove mortal. No ſooner did ſhe receive the awful intelligence, than ſhe addreſſed the following letter to the Duke of Arandina, to be

delivered by Iſabella after her death.

"DON JOHN,

"IT is in acts of mercy only that man can reſemble Heaven. Remember *that* whilſt you read this letter; which will not be delivered to you till the trembling hand that writes, and the bleeding heart that dictates, are no more.

"I ACKNOWLEDGE, that by marrying your too-amiable brother I injured him irreparably. I reduced him to unmerited poverty; I deprived him of your friendſhip and your protection; and yet could only recompence all theſe loſſes by beſtowing

ing on him my unworthy ſelf: A reward highly inadequate to his deſerts; but the unfortunate Eliza had no other to confer, and the too-generous Don Frederick was ſatisfied.

"GREAT as is the pleaſure with which I behold my approaching diſſolution, when I conſider that a few hours will certainly reunite me to my much-beloved Frederick; yet my pleaſure is far from unalloyed, when I reflect that the only fruit of our fatal ſhort-lived union, the hapleſs Iſabella, whoſe misfortunes were coeval with her birth, will (if you withhold your protection) be expoſed to innumerable dangers.

Have

Have pity, then, on the helpleſs orphan, who will deliver this to your hands; and who, if you deſert her, will be left to the wide world, without one friendly hand to guide her infant ſteps. Reflect, Don John, on the ills to which the continuation of your reſentment muſt expoſe her. Do not puniſh Iſabella for the errors of her unhappy parents. They have drunk deep of the bitter cup of affliction, do not oblige her to ſwallow the dregs. By kindneſs to my Iſabella, you will atone for all the ſufferings you have cauſed me. I, with my dying breath, forgive you; and righteous Heaven will alſo pardon you, if you are a protector to my dear infant. A tremor, that now

pervades

pervades my whole frame, obliges me to conclude with once more aſſuring you of the pardon, nay, of the eſteem, of

The unfortunate

ELIZA."

SCARCELY had Eliza finiſhed this letter, when, claſping Iſabella in her arms, ſhe ceaſed to ſigh, and ſought her Frederick in the realms of bliſs. No ſooner was Eliza entombed with her Frederick, than Iſabella was ſent to the Caſtle of Villarea, where Don John then reſided. On her arrival, ſhe delivered to him her mother's letter, which he read with conſiderable attention; and, after pauſing upon it for ſome time, he ordered his niece

niece to be placed in the convent of Ventina, where ſhe remained till the age of ſixteen. The Duke then determined to place her in his own Caſtle: a determination with which ſhe was by no means pleaſed; as, from the ſpecimens which ſhe had ſeen of her uncle's behaviour during two or three ſhort viſits at the convent, ſhe had no great proſpect of happineſs under his roof or in his ſociety. Added to this, ſhe could not bid an eternal adieu to thoſe walls where ſhe had paſſed ſo many happy hours, without feeling ſome pangs, eſpecially as ſhe was then to be for ever ſeparated from the friends of her youth, of whom the moſt diſtinguiſhed was Donna Laura de Caſſildina.

Caſſildina. The parting of theſe ladies was highly affecting to *both*, but eſpecially to Donna Iſabella, who looked with horror on a world, which ſhe had been ever taught to conſider as worſe than it really is.

Of her reception at Villarea, a full account is to be ſeen in her firſt letter to Donna Laura, with whom ſhe conſtantly correſponded, and to whom ſhe communicated every event that befel her during their ſeparation.

Thus, then, I have collected all the facts relating to the life of Donna Iſabella della Villarea; a woman diſtinguiſhed by every amiable quality;

ty; in whom even the prying eye of envy could not discover a flaw, whilst malice itself paid her virtue the tribute of silence.

SPANISH

SPANISH MEMOIRS;

IN A

SERIES OF ORIGINAL LETTERS.

LETTER I.

DONNA ISABELLA VILLAREA *to* DONNA LAURA DE CASSILDINA.

From the Caſtle of Villarea.

IN obedience to the ſacred injunctions of my Laura, I ſhall not fail to inform her of every event, however trivial, that may occur in this

dreary ſolitude: A ſolitude which alone can be baniſhed by the preſence of her to whom I now write. For her preſence, however, I have no reaſon to hope; I am almoſt tempted to ſay, I do not entertain a wiſh. My uncle's behaviour could not fail to render this place truly diſagreeable to my deareſt friend; and great as the happineſs of her ſociety muſt always be to the wretched Iſabella, it would ſuffer an alloy which in the end would prove its deſtruction, when I reflected that I was a ſource of pain to her who has been the friend of my youth, who ſo kindly ſoothed my woes, and to whom I am indebted for the ſmall portion of felicity which I once enjoyed——but

of

of which I am now for ever deprived.

My Laura will not be a little anxious to hear what was the reception I met with from the Duke on my arrival. He received me at the gate, ſurrounded by a numerous train of domeſtics in rich dreſſes, who appeared to me the fineſt people I had ever ſeen; and though I have been here ſome days, I cannot yet reconcile myſelf to giving them my orders.

My uncle's reception of me was formal and polite. He told the ſervants, that they muſt henceforth conſider me as their miſtreſs, and muſt

pay an implicit obedience to my commands. He then introduced me to his father-confeſſor, who reſides in the houſe with him, and who appears to be about fifty, has a pleaſing countenance, an air ſtrongly tinctured with melancholy, and manners highly poliſhed. From what I have ſeen of him, I have reaſon to hope he will prove an agreeable companion. A ſummons to attend the Duke leaves me only time to ſubſcribe myſelf,

The unalterably

Affectionate friend of my Laura.

LETTER

LETTER II.

From the ſame to the ſame.

TEN thouſand thanks for my Laura's letter: it has ſcarce ever been out of my hands ſince its arrival. The affectionate regard which you ſo kindly expreſs for me, ſerves only to increaſe my regret, when I reflect that I am for-

ever baniſhed from ſo amiable a friend. But, as you have often obſerved, it is our duty to ſubmit, without repining, to the diſpenſations of Providence, whoſe conduct to ſhort-ſighted mortals ſeems ſometimes ſevere, when it is directed to their good, and when a different conduct would involve them in miſery. But my buſineſs at preſent is not to moralize, but to deſcribe the Caſtle and its environs. The houſe is ancient, and the building has an air of melancholy grandeur, well ſuited to my diſpoſition. The orange groves that ſurround it, and which are now in full bloſſom, add greatly to the beauty of the place; and, would Heaven grant me the preſence of my Laura,

I ſhould eſteem it a perfect paradiſe. A poor compliment this to Villarea; as earth contains not the ſpot, however barren or however horrid, that would not appear to me a paradiſe, if that ſpot contained my Laura.

The peaſantry are poor and lazy; but as my uncle's allowance to me is liberal, I can remedy the former, though not the latter evil. Indeed I greatly fear all attempts on that head will prove ineffectual; as every writer, who has mentioned the peaſantry of Spain, ſpeaks of them as indolent in the extreme. The moſt induſtrious peaſantry of whom I have ever read any account, are thoſe of England; though, having only ſeen

them

them represented by writers of their own country, I know not what credit is to be given to the representations.

In your letter, you express a wish to become more acquainted with my uncle. Of him, however, I know nothing more than at my first arrival, as he lives chiefly alone; and, wherever he appears, preserves so much state, as renders unsuccessful all attempts to become acquainted with him.

Father Alberto is a widely different character. His pleasing manners and melancholy air deeply interest you in every thing that concerns

cerns him. He is ſo good as to join me in my walks, and exerts himſelf on all occaſions to render my reſidence here pleaſant. You would like him much. If all men reſembled him, what a world would this be! My Laura perhaps would then quit the peaceful cloiſter, and adorn ſome high ſtation in active life.—— But I muſt bid you adieu, as the letters are called for, and my paper is nearly exhauſted. I will, however, always leave room enough to admit of my ſubſcribing myſelf,

Yours unalterably,

And ever affectionately,

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER III.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY Laura is too grateful for my letters; as, were I debarred the privilege of addreſſing her, I ſhould not know how to employ thoſe hours of my life which I do not conſecrate to heaven. But ſo great is the pleaſure of writing to my friend,

friend, that, whilſt I have my pen in my hand, I almoſt forget that I am unfortunate. The Duke is going to Madrid on buſineſs. How happy is it for me that his exceſſive *hauteur* induces him to live entirely in the country, inſtead of ſpending his whole life in Madrid, as do all men of his rank! But at Court he finds, what he will never brook, a *ſuperior*. He leaves me here to guard the Caſtle in his abſence. I am rejoiced that I am not of the party, as then I ſhould have ſcarcely found time to tell my Laura how I love her. But as I remain at Villarea, I ſhall have little elſe to do, except to offer up prayers for her happineſs; an employment highly grateful, and of which I ſhall never

never be weary. No, Laura, never will I ceaſe entreating Heaven to ſhower down its choiceſt bleſſings on your head. May your days flow gently on; may tranquil pleaſure gild your future years; and never may the misfortunes of Iſabella extend their baneful influence over the fate of her friend.——The Duke is juſt about to depart, and has ordered me to his apartment to receive his commands. ——The Duke is gone, attended by a numerous train. The Caſtle really ſeems like a deſert. Were you to ſee it, you would ſuppoſe ſome fatal cataſtrophe had happened in the family—ſo great an effect can the abſence even of the moſt inſignificant people produce.

FATHER

FATHER ALBERTO has juſt been here. He adviſes me to fly to you for a few days. How good, how amiable he is! He undertakes to ſettle it with the Duke; and I ſhall be with you almoſt as ſoon as this letter. O with what ecſtacy do I look forward to our meeting! when I ſhall embrace you, and aſſure you in perſon how ſincerely I am

Your unalterably affectionate

ISABELLA.

LETTER IV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

HERE I am at length returned to Villarea and to miſery. O, Laura! what did I not feel when forced to tear myſelf from your arms!—to leave thoſe much-loved walls, within which we have ſpent

ſo

ſo many happy hours; when, free from care and free from danger, our time was devoted to Heaven and to our own improvement. On thoſe hours and on that employment I reflect with pleaſure mingled with regret; for though they ſtill are yours, to me they never will return. How painful is that thought!—And ſhall we never meet again? I truſt we ſhall: and be aſſured, that no event (however gloomy its appearance) will by me be deemed unfortunate, which reſtores Iſabella to Ventina and to you.

The Duke is juſt returned, and approves of my having viſited you.

Father Alberto has invited me to walk; I ſhall therefore defer the concluſion of my letter till my return from my ramble, which will not fail to be pleaſant, as he is of the party. So adieu for the preſent. On my return I ſhall reſume my pen.

After a long walk, I am returned home, and with pleaſure ſit down to addreſs my Laura. My pleaſure, indeed, is the greater, as my amiable friend Alberto has begun the relation of his own memoirs; ſo that now I ſhall be at no loſs for materials of which to compoſe my letters. I ſhall, however, defer entering on his ſtory

till

till my next; and I ſhall conclude with aſſuring my Laura, that I am

Hers unalterably,

ISABELLA.

LETTER V.

From the ſame to the ſame.

YOU are, no doubt, my dear Laura, anxious to become acquainted with the memoirs of Alberto. I ſhall therefore proceed to relate them in his own words as nearly as I can.——"Your goodneſs (ſaid he) having often led you to expreſs

preſs a wiſh that you were acquainted with my hiſtory, I will, without reſerve, communicate to you all the particulars of it with which I myſelf am acquainted.

" Forty years ago, the maſter of a Spaniſh merchantman being on a voyage to England, whither he was bound to diſpoſe of his cargo, it happened that one night there aroſe a violent ſtorm. Juſt as it began, he deſcried an Engliſh ſhip making ſignals of diſtreſs; but the violence of the hurricane prevented him from rendering her any aſſiſtance, and ſhe periſhed in the ſtorm. The next morning, the winds being now calmed, he diſcovered me, then not apparently

parently above a year old, floating on a piece of the wreck. He inſtantly took me on board; and, ſome ſigns of life appearing, all attempts were made for my recovery; and theſe at laſt proving ſucceſsful, my preſerver, when all inquiries after my original proved ineffectual, adopted me as his ſon. No fewer than three Engliſh ſhips had periſhed in that ſtorm; nor could he find any one who knew that any of them had a child on board. Thus was I precluded for ever from diſcovering to whom I owed my birth,—and whether or not both my parents periſhed in that fatal night;——fatal to *me*, becauſe it deprived me of my natural protectors, and yet did not rob

me

me of a life that has been perpetually overcaſt with the gloomy clouds of misfortune. But the ways of Providence are unſearchable; and it is our duty to ſubmit to its will without repining. Nor have I any doubt but that for wiſe and good reaſons my life was preſerved from the mercileſs waves. Under the roof of my ſecond father (whoſe name I bear), the firſt ſixteen years of my life were paſſed in eaſe and tranquillity, when the good man propoſed that I ſhould accompany him on a voyage to Italy. As was natural at my age, I embraced with pleaſure an offer of ſeeing foreign countries, and a few days brought us in ſight of the Italian coaſt. On our arrival at port, I haſtened

ſtened on ſhore, that I might gratify my curioſity, and make obſervations on the inhabitants of a country which had ſo often given lords to the world. It happened, that one night as I was walking alone on a retired part of the beach, I heard the ſhrieks of ſome perſon in diſtreſs, and they appeared to be thoſe of a female. I followed the ſound; and ſoon diſcovered two ruffians dragging a moſt beautiful woman towards a boat that waited for them. I flew with the utmoſt ſpeed to reſcue the diſtreſſed fair one, and was happy enough to prove ſucceſsful in the enterpriſe; for having diſpatched one of the villains, the other made a precipitate retreat, leaving me maſter of the field."

Here,

Here, however, Laura, I muſt ſtop, as here Father Alberto was ſummoned to attend the Duke. The next poſt ſhall give you more information concerning the fair unknown; in the mean time, believe me

Yours affectionately,

ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA.

LETTER.

LETTER VI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

FATHER ALBERTO's goodneſs having furniſhed me with ample matter for another letter, it is with the greateſt pleaſure that I now addreſs my Laura. I would indeed write oftener than I do, were it not that the deep ſolitude in which I

dwell furniſhes nothing worthy of notice. When I take up my pen to addreſs you, I relinquiſh it for want of matter. Were I to ſay I love you ſincerely, *that* you know already; ſo that when I have nothing new to communicate, you muſt not blame me for being ſilent. Thus much for myſelf in anſwer to your laſt. We will now proceed to the memoirs of our friend.

"AFTER (contiuued he) the villains were defeated, I was left at full leiſure to contemplate the fair unknown, who ſoon recovered ſuch a degree of recollection as to thank me for the ſervice which I had rendered her. After gazing with ecſtacy

on the moſt perfect form that I had ever beheld, I requeſted permiſſion to attend her home. To this ſhe conſented; and we proceeded to a very high wall, through which, by an iron gate, we entered a moſt beautiful garden. As we proceeded toward the houſe, which terminated the view, ſhe informed me that her name was Eſtafania; that ſhe was the only daughter of a conſiderable merchant of the name of Altino, and heireſs to all his fortunes. "To that "indeed (ſaid ſhe) I attribute the "calamity from which your valour "has reſcued me. The *fame of my* "*wealth*, rather than the *luſtre of my* "*charms*, procured me many ſuitors. "Amongſt them was Alcanzar, for

"whom

" whom I conceived an inſuperable
" averſion, which his ſubſequent
" conduct has fully juſtified. He be-
" came much exaſperated at my be-
" haviour, and determined to carry
" me off by force; in which attempt
" he would have ſucceeded, had not
" your ſword rid me for ever of
" ſuch a dangerous enemy. The
" ſervice which you have done to
" me is ſuch as I never can repay.
" I will, however, now introduce
" you to the preſence of thoſe, who
" will endeavour to teſtify the grati-
" tude they muſt entertain for your
" conduct towards their daughter."
Saying this, ſhe conducted me into a ſaloon, in the midſt of which there played a fountain, ſurrounded by

orange-trees in large vaſes."——But here, Laura, I muſt ſtop, as the time will only admit of my ſubſcribing myſelf

Yours unalterably.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

YOU are no doubt, Laura, very anxious for the ſequel of Alberto's narrative: I ſhall therefore proceed in his own words as nearly as I can recollect them.

"In the ſaloon I was introduced to the father and mother of Eſtafania; who, on hearing the ſtory of her eſcape, returned their moſt grateful thanks to her deliverer. After remaining ſome time, I propoſed to return to the ſhip; and, having requeſted permiſſion to make perſonal inquiry after the health of Eſtafania, was with difficulty permitted to retire. They aſſured me how happy I ſhould make them by a frequent repetition of my viſit; and the next day I accordingly returned, and was received with every poſſible demonſtration of gratitude. Her parents now expreſſed a wiſh to know to whom they were endebted for the deliverance of their daughter. I informed

formed them with the utmoſt frankneſs of my ſituation, and gave them a ſhort ſketch of my memoirs. When I concluded, they expreſſed their hopes that fortune would now prove propitious, and would ceaſe to perſecute me (here, however, they were, alas! miſtaken.) They preſented me with a ring of conſiderable value; and deſired me, during my reſidence there, to conſider their houſe as my home: A requeſt with which I moſt readily complied, as the charms of Eſtafania had made me her ſlave. For ſeveral weeks I enjoyed the moſt exquiſite happineſs; but it was too great to laſt. Our buſineſs being concluded, we prepared to viſit Spain. I quitted Italy with

with the utmoſt reluctance: but I was a dependent; and could not therefore think of remaining with Eſtafania, although my vanity led me to believe that I was not diſagreeable to her. When the dreaded hour of departure arrived, I repaired to the houſe of Altino, and found Eſtafania ſitting alone in the ſaloon. As it was the laſt opportunity I ſhould have of ſeeing her, I determined to reveal the ſentiments with which ſhe had inſpired me. She received my declaration with emotion, but devoid of ſurpriſe; aſſured me, that time ſhould never efface from her memory the eſſential ſervice which I had rendered her; that if ever ſhe ſaw me more, ſhe ſhould think

think herſelf too happy; that as I propoſed returning to Italy the next ſummer, ſhe would, in the mean time, endeavour to obtain her parents conſent, that ſhe might beſtow her *hand* on one who, ſhe ſaid, had well deſerved her *heart*."——Here, however, Laura, I ſhall ſtop, as here Father Alberto was again ſummoned to attend the Duke. Adieu, deareſt friend; believe me

Ever yours,

I. D. VILLAREA.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

DONNA ISABELLA *in continuation.*

FROM this morning's walk I have learned the reſt of Alberto's tale.——" After (continued he) I had taken leave of her father and mother, I embarked for Spain, and

a

a ſhort voyage landed us at Cadiz. But, ah! how altered was I ſince I ſailed thence! I had ſuſtained a loſs we never can ſuffer but once. The change it had effected was ſo ſtriking as to be obſerved by every one who ſaw me. I now played none but plaintive airs, and ſeldom touched my guitar without bedewing it with my tears. I was become the victim of melancholy; and the image of Eſtafania was never abſent from my mind. At night, when fancy was permitted to rove unfettered by the chains of reaſon, I was perpetually wafted to thoſe ſcenes of former joys, the ſhores of Italy, where indeed I enjoyed a bliſs ſupreme, the ſociety of my Eſtafania. But, alas! the bliſsful

phantoms

phantoms vaniſhed at the approach of day, and each new ſun beheld my griefs increaſe. In this manner near a year had elapſed, when my kind friend the ſhipmaſter informed me that he was ſoon to reviſit Italy. You will eaſily conceive with what readineſs I embraced the propoſal, and with what anxiety I embarked; but when the ſhores of Italy appeared, my anxiety became unutterable. Sometimes my fancy repreſented Eſtafania welcoming me with joy; ſometimes her *monument* roſe to my view; and, at other times, methought I ſaw her bleſſing the arms of ſome happy rival. At length, however, the wiſhed-for dreaded hour of debarkation arrived, and I

haſtened to land."——Here a flood of tears relieved my worthy friend; and here I ſhall for the preſent conclude my narrative. Adieu, deareſt Laura. Believe me

Ever yours,

ISABELLA.

LETTER IX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

DONNA ISABELLA in continuation.

"SCARCE (continued he) had I reached the ſhore, before my attention was arreſted by the ſight of a marble monument, erected beneath the ſhade of a large willow, which

which ſeemed to weep over the urn it ſhadowed. I approached with prophetic horror, as if I had known that it contained the aſhes of the too amiable woman, in whoſe cauſe I was once ſo happy as to draw a ſucceſsful ſword. What did I not feel, when, on a nearer approach, I diſcovered that it was inſcribed with the name of ESTAFANIA! Chilled with horror at the ſight, I remained motionleſs, till recalled to myſelf by the approach of a man who had long ſerved the family of her whom I adored. From him I learned, that ſome months had elapſed ſince Heaven had claimed its own. A conſumption which attacked my amiable miſtreſs ſoon terminated her ſublu-

nary exiſtence, and ſnatched her from the arms of two worthy and affectionate parents; who, unable to behold without agony the ſcenes of former bliſs, had removed to a diſtant territory, leaving their manſion to the care of ſervants; having determined never to reviſit ſcenes that muſt neceſſarily call to remembrance the virtues and the fate of an only child, with whom periſhed all their hopes of earthly happineſs.

"HAVING indulged my grief for ſome time, I returned to the veſſel; and, after paſſing a fortnight in a ſtate too horrible to be deſcribed, I returned to Spain. Previous to my departure, I once more ventured to viſit

viſit the urn that contained all the happineſs I ever poſſeſſed, and with an aching heart bid a laſt adieu to the ſhores of Italy."——Here we were interrupted, and here I ſhall ſtop; as I am too much affected by the ſad tale I have juſt heard to admit of my doing more than ſubſcribing myſelf

Yours unalterably,

ISABELLA.

LETTER X.

From the ſame to the ſame.

DONNA ISABELLA in continuation.

"AFTER my return to Spain (continued he), I determined to enter into the prieſthood, and was ſoon nominated by your uncle to be his chaplain; and though happineſs

pineſs on this ſide the grave can never be mine, yet here I enjoy a quiet life well ſuited to my diſpoſition. In all my diſtreſſes, I have looked to Heaven for ſupport, and have never been diſappointed. In the practice of religious duties, I have a pleaſure which is totally independent of worldly circumſtances; and had much happineſs of another ſort been my lot, I ſhould probably not have experienced that pleaſure. That every happineſs (continued he) which this world can beſtow, may be yours, is my ſincereſt wiſh: but if you, like me, are doomed to live to grief, may you, like me, ſeek comfort in religion; and remember, that however melancholy

choly our proſpects may appear, the rays of piety and virtue will diſpel, or at leaſt greatly diſſipate, the ſurrounding gloom. The mind that is *truly virtuous* can never be *wholly wretched.*"——Here he ceaſed, and I retired to my chamber to communicate to Laura the concluſion of the wo-fraught tale. It is the property of misfortune to ſoften the manners and ennoble the mind. Thoſe who themſelves have ſuffered, are ever prone to pity the ſufferings of others. But why ſhould I weary my Laura with remarks? Nothing that I can advance on the ſubject will enrich her accompliſhed mind with one new idea. That every happineſs

may

may through life attend her, is the ſincereſt wiſh of

Her unalterably affectionate

ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA.

LETTER.

LETTER XI.

DONNA LAURA *to* DONNA ISABELLA *on her having aſſumed the Veil.*

YESTERDAY, my Iſabella, I pronounced the ſolemn vow, by which I am bound to conſecrate ſolely to religion the remainder of my days. Many have conſidered this ſecluſion from the world as an act highly

highly meritorious, though to me it appears in a light widely different. By retiring from the world at the early dawn of life, we in a manner quit the ſtation aſſigned us by Providence; and, however we may employ ourſelves, can at beſt be deemed but deſerters. Some there are, indeed, whoſe weak virtue is ill qualified to reſiſt the powerful attacks it muſt daily experience from vice and folly: theſe do wiſely to fly, rather than, by a feeble and unſucceſsful reſiſtance, to increaſe the triumph of a wicked world. Conſcious that the ſmall portion of virtue which I poſſeſs would ſcarcely be ſufficient to ſupport me in the hour of trial, I have determined to ſhun a foe I am not

not able to encounter. I am, however, well aware with what approbation Heaven beholds the conduct of thoſe who, though ſurrounded by the ſtrongeſt temptations, and allured by all the incitements of pleaſure, continue with unſhaken perſeverance to tread the paths of virtue, and by their bright example reflect honour on their nature and their God. For an undertaking ſo arduous, Heaven has fully qualified my Iſabella. Each noble, each heavenly virtue, finds an aſylum in her breaſt, where they all unite to direct her thoughts and her actions. The reward of a life ſo employed will, no doubt, be proportionably ſplendid. That it may be long before you claim

that reward, is, however, the ſincereſt wiſh of one, to whom (were heaven to claim its own) this world would be a vale of tears.

ADIEU, my deareſt Iſabella. Believe me

Yours moſt affectionately

And unalterably,

LAURA DE CASSILDINA*.

* Here I ought to have inſerted a letter of Iſabella's in reply to the above; but an accident that befel it after it came into my poſſeſſion, unhappily rendered the characters totally illegible.

LETTER XII.

DONNA ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA *to* DONNA LAURA DE CASSILDINA.

OH, my Laura! how can I paint my preſent feelings? The Duke being ſuddenly called from home for a few days, I determined to gratify an inclination I had long felt, and to indulge my feelings by viſiting

viſiting the hallowed ſpot where the honoured aſhes of my parents moulder. Accompanied by Alberto, I ſet out for the village where my infant years were ſpent. At the cloſe of day we reached the hamlet; and having ſecured a lodging at the houſe of the Curè, I repaired, with a throbbing heart, to the tomb of my parents. A grove of cypreſs appeared. I entered with cautious ſteps, as if I feared to waken thoſe who ſlept. It is a covered monument in the form of an altar, compoſed of black and white marble. I would have advanced, but the ſcene was too much for my weak ſpirits. I fainted in the arms of Alberto and Marianne. When their attention reſtored me, I

approached the tomb; and, by the pale moon's uncertain light, read the inſcription, which mentioned their names, and the dates of their reſpective deaths. O Heaven, Laura, what were my feelings! I fell on my knees,—I bedewed the hallowed marble with my tears,—called on each dear departed ſhade;—then turned to heaven my ſtreaming eyes, and begged a bleſſing.

In vain Alberto tried to remove me from the monument: for me it had reſiſtleſs attractions; and whilſt memory is mine, ſhall be for ever dear. At length I was perſuaded to retire; but it was with the greateſt difficulty I could ever prevail on myſelf

ſelf to quit the awful ſcene. The ſtream, that flowed with melancholy murmurs through the grove, ſeemed to reproach me for quitting the ſacred ſpot; but half the night was ſpent, and Alberto feared a longer ſtay might injure my health. I complied with his wiſh. On my arrival at the Curè's, I inſtantly retired to my apartment; and, notwithſtanding the dejection of my ſpirits, I fell aſleep. Fancy, fleeting fancy, tranſported me back to the tomb of Frederic and Eliza. It appeared to me, after I had remained ſome time kneeling at their ſhrine, that the monument opened, and that I inſtantly entered; the maſſive portals then cloſed, and I waked to lament an

exiſtence that is indeed painful. At the firſt dawn of the day I reviſited the grove; and, after ſhedding ſome tributary tears, returned with Alberto to Villarea. Adieu, deareſt Laura.

Pity your

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

A SEVERE illneſs has for ſome time prevented my addreſſing my Laura; but I ſhall with the greateſt pleaſure conſecrate theſe firſt hours of returning health to friendſhip and to her. My illneſs was indeed of ſo ſerious and alarming a nature,

ture, that my uncle condeſcended to make perſonal inquiries after my health, though that wonderful event took place but once during the courſe of a long illneſs.

I CANNOT ſay I was very grateful for that one inſtance of his condeſcenſion; as, though it was not then probable that we ſhould ever meet till time ſhould have deſtroyed even the remembrance of the illuſtrious houſe of Arandina, he preſerved as much ſtate as if he had been viſiting a dying galley-ſlave, rather than a niece, who (however her unhappy parents may have injured his pride) has never by any action of her life derogated from his dignity. The good

good Alberto was ſeldom abſent from my chamber, and endeavoured as much as poſſible to alleviate my ſufferings. He offered to inform you of my ſituation; but I choſe you ſhould remain in ignorance of thoſe ſorrows you could not alleviate. I am, however, ſo well recovered at preſent, as to walk out in the cool of the evening. In the faces of my faithful Marianne and Alberto, I can diſcover the ſtrongeſt marks of pleaſure at my recovery. Adieu. I am juſt going to walk. The evening is ſo divine, that, if Laura were to accompany me, I could eaſily be perſuaded that my connection with this world had ceaſed, and that I had really entered into the bright

regions.

regions of eternal day: but if that were the caſe, I ſhould ſee thoſe dear parents, who are now no longer the victims of fate.

Adieu, deareſt friend.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

OH, Laura, what a ſcene have I juſt witneſſed! We went to walk that we might enjoy the delightful evening. Scarcely had we entered the grove that terminates the

the lawn, when we were alarmed by the claſhing of ſwords; and in a moment my terror was increaſed to the higheſt, at ſeeing a man with a ſword in his hand, and covered with blood, ſpring over the fence. No ſooner did I behold this horrid ſpectacle, than I ſunk into the arms of the faithful Marianne. Meanwhile the ſtranger who had thus alarmed us requeſted our protection, informing us that he had juſt eſcaped from aſſaſſins, with whom he had long maintained an unequal combat. Father Alberto having aſſured him of protection, directed all his endeavours towards effecting my recovery, in which he at length ſucceeded;

and the firſt object that I beheld was the bleeding ſtranger kneeling at my feet. A ſight ſo horrible occaſioned an inſtantaneous relapſe; and it was with difficulty my wavering ſpirit was ever recalled. How happy if it then had ſought another world, and united me to my dear, dear parents, of whom I am for ever talking with my good old nurſe. On my recovery, I learned what I have juſt communicated to you. We ſent the ſtranger to the gardener's lodge, and ordered all poſſible care and attention to be ſhown him. We would indeed have placed him in the Caſtle, but that we dreaded the Duke's temper, which, you know, is rather

warm. The ſequel of this ſtrange tale ſhall be the ſubject of another letter from

Yours unalterably,

ISABELLA DONNA VILLAREA.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

DONNA ISABELLA *in continuation.*

I AM juſt returned from a viſit to the lodge in company with Alberto. We had an interview with the unfortunate ſtranger, who is now ſo much recovered from his wounds as to ſit in the garden on a bench for ſome hours every day. At our ap-

proach, he attempted to riſe; but from loſs of blood was too feeble. After recovering himſelf a little, and returning his thanks in the moſt pleaſing manner, he thus addreſſed us: "I am the only ſon of Albino de "Caſtina a merchant in Cadiz, who "has a ſmall houſe in this neighbour-"hood, whither I was going when "attacked by the ruffians, from "whom you ſo kindly protected me. "They were hired to aſſaſſinate me "by a woman of conſiderable wealth, "who has done me the honour to "entertain ſentiments in my favour. "To theſe I made not a ſuitable re-"turn; which has ſo exaſperated her, "that ſhe determined on having a "bloody revenge. On that revenge

"I

"I ſhall ever reflect with pleaſure,
"ſince to it I am indebted for the
"honour of being known to the pre-
"ſent company. My humble ſitua-
"tion in life precludes me from teſti-
"fying my gratitude in any way
"but by words; yet you will, I
"truſt, do me the juſtice to believe
"me, when I aſſure you, that the
"*power* alone is wanting on my part;
"and that my *life* (my only poſſeſ-
"ſion) will for ever be at the devo-
"tion of thoſe to whom I am in-
"debted for its prolongation."

He was by this time ſo much exhauſted, that Father Alberto interrupted his grateful effuſions; and, after repeating our injunctions to the

ſervants, we retired. We have ſent to inform his father of the miſfortune that had befallen him, and his arrival is hourly expected. Thus much of our poor *protegé*. Of myſelf I have nothing to ſay, but that I am, as uſual,

Yours unalterably,

And ever affectionately,

ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREAL.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY *protegé* is now ſo well recovered as to think of returning to Cadiz. There is ſomething in his manner that intereſts me much in his behalf. You cannot conceive how I pity him; the more, as he has no proſpect of being able to pacify the

the enraged fair one, unleſs he were to conſecrate to her ſervice the remainder of a life which ſhe has ſo baſely attempted to ſhorten. He ſeems much engroſſed with his own reflections; and is, I fancy, the ſlave of ſome leſs willing damſel than his *intended murderess*. If this be the caſe, he has my beſt wiſhes for his ſucceſs. He is an unfortunate man, and 'twere pity he ſhould ſuffer more. He has returned thanks for the favours which he has received, and is preparing to depart. He goes next week. He is really an amiable man. I wiſh he were known to Laura. But why ſhould I wiſh him to contemplate charms which he never could poſſeſs? Why ſhould

I add deſpair to the catalogue of his misfortunes?

The Duke ſets off to-morrow for Madrid. I wiſh my Laura were to ſupply his place at the Caſtle. But Laura has vowed eternal ſolitude; ſhe conſecrates to religion alone thoſe hours which, if ſometimes devoted to friendſhip, would make me happy beyond conception. Oh that my poor rhetoric could have prevailed on her not to pronounce the fatal vow! How wiſh I that it were in my power to viſit you in the abſence of the Duke: but I fear he would not approve of my always running away the moment he left the Caſtle, though this might be conſtrued

ſtrued into a great compliment to him, as it would imply, that the Caſtle is intolerable when he is not here to enliven the ſcene. I will not, however, devote all my paper to complimenting the Duke; but will reſerve room enough to admit of my ſubſcribing myſelf

Yours unalterably.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

WHY does my Laura reproach me with want of affection? Why ſay that my letters are leſs friendly than before? What proof can I give her of that friendſhip, which I now do and ever ſhall entertain for my amiable nun? What will

will convince her that I am as much hers now as when we firſt joined in choral praiſes to the Deity? Oh, Laura, how have I wept over your cruel page? If ever I ceaſe to value your friendſhip, may I then ceaſe (my trembling hand with reluctance writes the dire ſentence) to enjoy it; but that fatal period can never arrive till your deſerted Iſabella ſeeks the peaceful abodes of death. Do not, by cruel accuſations, embitter the already wretched life of your poor Iſabella. Do not add the loſs of your eſteem to the ſad catalogue of her woes, at the recital of which you have ſo often wept, ſo bitterly lamented. I can ſay no more; my tears obliterate faſter than I write.

O pity a wretch whom Providence has ſo ſeverely viſited, and do not deprive her of her only friend!—her only earthly comfort! Adieu. Tho' deprived of your friendſhip, I will ſtill be yours, and yours alone.

LETTER XVIII.

From ALONZO DE CASTINA *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

NOTHING but my having already experienced your goodneſs could lead me to hope your pardon for the liberty I am going to take; but I cannot bid adieu to my kind benefactreſs, without earneſtly

foliciting

ſoliciting an interview of five minutes, at which no third perſon ſhall be preſent. I truſt ſhe will have the goodneſs to add this favour to the many ſhe has already conferred on him, who is, with gratitude and reſpect, her devoted ſlave. If you will not grant, at leaſt pardon the requeſt of

ALONZO DE CASTINA.

LETTER XIX.

DONNA ISABELLA *in answer.*

I HAVE this instant received your billet, containing a request with which it is totally impossible that I should comply. The service which I rendered you merits few thanks. Alleviating the sufferings of my fellow-creatures, is to me at once a duty and

a

a pleaſure. I conducted myſelf toward you as I ſhould toward any other perſon whom I had ſeen in your ſtate. By not repeating your requeſt, you may obtain the pardon of

ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA.

LETTER XX.

ALONZO DE CASTINA *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

I LIKE a coward fled from death; and now life is decreed to be my puniſhment; doomed as I am to worſhip thoſe charms I muſt never more behold. How much more enviable had been my lot, if, covered with

with wounds, I had expired at the feet of Iſabella! My fate might then have obtained her pity; I ſhould at leaſt have eſcaped her ſcorn. But ſince my pardon can be obtained only by never repeating my requeſt, I will retire to ſome ſolitude, where I will continue to regret the interpoſition of Providence that preſerved my life, merely that I might experience the ſcorn of that woman, at whoſe feet I ſhould have with pleaſure breathed my laſt. But I muſt ſubmit. What can the wretched do! They can only lament; and to that employment will Alonzo conſecrate the remainder of a life which was once preſerved, and is now embittered, by the too amiable Iſabella;

bella; whilſt that every happineſs may attend her, ſhall be the conſtant prayer of one who muſt for ever regret the diſtance which fortune has placed between him and happineſs.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

I HAVE this day received from Alonzo two letters, which I ſend you incloſed, together with my anſwer. I hope you will approve of it, though perhaps it was cruel to refuſe him one five minutes interview,

view, he is ſo much hurt by the refuſal. However, he is gone; ſo I ſhall diſmiſs the ſubject: But, do tell me, whether or not you would have granted the requeſt. I wiſh you had been here to adviſe me. Was it wrong to refuſe him? Do write me word. My head achs ſo much, that I ſhall go and walk a little. At my return I will finiſh my letter.

Oh, Laura, I am undone! I have ſeen Alonzo. I went alone to walk in the grove. I had not been long there when Alonzo, ruſhing from amongſt the trees, threw himſelf at my feet. He earneſtly begged a moment's audience. I weakly complied;—liſtened to the moſt eloquent

of

of beings. He ſighed, knelt, vowed eternal love, and has ruined the peace of Iſabella. I fear I love him, but I will conquer myſelf. Am I not right? How do you adviſe me to act? Do, tell me. I am half diſtracted: What muſt I do? I have exiled him: What more can I do? Do, tell me; and believe me

Ever yours,

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

DON ALONZO *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

IN obedience to the commands of her I adore, I am now at Cadiz, where I propoſe to remain till once more permitted to urge my ſuit in perſon. I truſt, however, that your *correſpondence* is a bleſſing I ſhall be permitted

permitted to enjoy; as, if *that* be withheld, my exile will be inſupportable. Prudence, indeed, may dictate a refuſal; but prudence is not ſufficiently powerful to render Iſabella cruel: yet ſuch ſhe muſt be eſteemed, were ſhe to anſwer this petition by a denial; as that would render the life ſhe preſerved for ever wretched. Whatever be the reſult of this letter, Iſabella will be ever adored by

ALONZO.

LETTER XXIII.

DONNA ISABELLA *in reply.*

I HAVE juſt received your letter, containing a requeſt,—the compliance with which would certainly be highly inconſiſtent with prudence. But, alas! prudence deſerted me where moſt I needed her ſupport. My conduct in the grove has already convinced

convinced you, that I am not inſenſible of your merit. Do not, however, wiſh to form a connection with one who has through life been unfortunate; and who, were ſhe to beſtow that hand you ſo earneſtly ſolicit, would bring, as a portion, miſeries, of which ſhe truſts you will be for ever ignorant. By correſponding with you, I ſhould only encourage hopes which I can never gratify; and, were the Duke to become acquainted with our correſpondence, I ſhould immediately forfeit his protection. You would then receive to your arms a poor deſerted orphan, whoſe only inheritance is misfortune, and whoſe ſole poſſeſſion is an aching heart. Do not ſuffer your reaſon to

be blinded by a violent, and conſequently ſhort-lived, paſſion. Before the circling year ſhall reſtore that day on which you firſt beheld me, you will almoſt have forgotten that the wretched writer of theſe lines exiſts. Do not, in the mean time, by your importunities, increaſe the afflictions of

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

DONNA ISABELLA DELLA VILLAREA *to* DONNA LAURA DE CASSILDINA.

OH, Laura! that fatal interview has deſtroyed my repoſe. I inſiſted on Alonzo's inſtantly quitting the neighbourhood; and forbade him my preſence for ever. He retired in ſilence; but ſince his de-

parture, he has written to me requeſting my correſpondence. This, of courſe, I refuſed; and have urged ſuch reaſons as will, I hope, be deemed ſufficient even by Alonzo. Righteous heaven! to know Iſabella, is to be unfortunate. I have not the power of conferring happineſs on any one. All I wiſh is to render no one miſerable.

INCLOSED you will receive his letter and my reply. From that reply you will learn, that he has made ſome impreſſion on a heart, that was, that muſt, be ever yours. O! that when Providence determined to prolong Alonzo's days, it had not choſen the wretched Iſabella as its inſtrument.

I ſhould not then have known that he exiſted. My years would, probably, have elapſed, undiſturbed by thoſe feelings which now diſtract my ſoul. Grant, Heaven, I be not numbered amongſt the crowds of victims that have fallen before its ſhrine! If ever the remembrance of my ſad tale ſhould be perpetuated, I, perhaps, like Heloiſe, may experience the pity of poſterity. When my aching heart ſhall have long ceaſed to beat, perhaps ſome kindred ſpirit may drop one tributary tear on my cold relics. But whither is my fancy roving? How far beyond the bounds of reaſon? Do, dear Laura, write to Alonzo: Endeavour to convince him

of

of his own imprudence. If you ſucceed, you will eternally oblige

Your

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

DONNA LAURA *to* DON ALONZO.

YOU will, no doubt, be much ſurpriſed at the receipt of a letter from one who is totally unknown to you. Your ſurpriſe will, probably, receive no ſmall addition, when

when you diſcover that your correſpondent is one whoſe life is devoted to religious retirement: Not who has retired from the world in diſguſt; but who has never experienced either its pains or its pleaſures: one whom nothing but the intereſt ſhe takes in the misfortunes of an amiable friend, could have induced to addreſs a perſon to whom ſhe is an entire ſtranger. But, at the requeſt of that Iſabella for whom you profeſs ſo ſerious a regard, I ſhall endeavour to convince you, that by continuing to ſolicit a hand you never can obtain, you will only inflict miſery on her whom you profeſs to adore, without, in any degree, advancing your own wiſhes. You have not to learn, that your

your rank in life leaves you no room to hope for the approbation of her uncle, one of the proudeſt grandees of Spain.

You are not ignorant of the miſfortunes of her parents: and can you wiſh, that, by your means, Iſabella ſhould experience a ſimilar fate? The only manner in which you can teſtify the ſincerity of your attachment is, by deſiſting from your preſent purſuit. By this conduct, and by this *alone*, will you ever convince her, that your gratitude is laſting. Should the arguments I have advanced, prove ſufficient to effect the purpoſe for which they are intended, I ſhall eſteem you a truly

grateful

grateful man; but if you perſiſt in ſoliciting the hand of Iſabella, ſuch conduct will plainly evince, that your *own* happineſs, and not that of Iſabella, is the object of your purſuit.

I remain your wellwiſher,

LAURA DE CASILDINA.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

DON ALONZO *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

NOT ſatisfied with blaſting all my hopes yourſelf, you invite others to join you in the cruel employment: Your friend Donna Laura has written to me a long expoſtulatory letter, in which ſhe calmly adviſes me to deſiſt from my pre-

ſent purſuit, as by that conduct, and by that *alone*, ſhe ſays, I can ever convince you that my gratitude is laſting. Gratitude,—what a word is that! If I am permitted to be only grateful, the preſervation of my life I muſt conſider as a misfortune; for I love you, I adore you, and feel, that without a return of love, I muſt for ever be wretched. That I am not worthy of ſuch a return, I am more ſenſible than your friend can be: but if you be determined to liſten to no addreſſes but thoſe which are worthy of you, to the exquiſite happineſs reſulting from a mutual attachment you muſt for ever remain a ſtranger; for the man has not yet been born, whoſe accompliſhments intitle

entitle him to the heart and hand of Iſabella. That in me it is preſumption to pretend to either, I needed not the information of Donna Laura to convince me; but from her alone have I learned, that my birth is the great obſtacle in my way to happineſs. Of the inferiority of my rank in life to that of the Duke of Arandina I am not ignorant; but can Iſabella,—can the daughter of Donna Eliza, put wealth, or titles, or a long line of anceſtry, in the balance, againſt the pureſt and moſt refined attachment, that ever inhabited a human breaſt? Your friend ſays that you can,—that you deem my addreſſes diſgraceful, and that they inflict miſery upon you. If this be

indeed the caſe, I will ceaſe to urge them. That I ſhould ever ceaſe to love you, till I ceaſe to exiſt, is impoſſible; but my love ſhall not be your torment: may you be happy, though I muſt be wretched. But, ſurely, a mind angelic as yours cannot delight in the wretchedneſs of others! And ſince your correſpondence, as a friend, would afford much relief to my aching heart, *that*, I hope, you will not refuſe, to one who will receive with ecſtacy, and remember with gratitude, the ineſtimable gift. If even this favour be denied me, I will inſtantly bid an eternal adieu to Spain, and wander over the world, till death ſhall kindly put a period to my ſufferings: Whilſt an

aged

aged parent, and an only ſiſter, will join with me in lamenting the diſtance of rank, which fortune has placed between the too lovely Iſabella and the exile who adores her. In anxious expectation of your anſwer,

I remain

Your devoted ſlave,

ALONZO.

LETTER XXVII.

DONNA ISABELLA *in reply.*

MY friendſhip you have had from the moment I firſt ſaw you; and ſooner than drive you to the extremities you threaten, I will not even refuſe you my correſpondence, provided that no references to that unhappy paſſion, which now reigns

reigns in your breaſt, ſhall ever occur in any of your letters. On theſe terms I conſent occaſionally to correſpond with you: Moved, indeed, by pity for thoſe to whom the execution of your raſh threats muſt occaſion ſo much pain. If in any inſtance you tranſgreſs this rule, you will hear no more from

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

I BLUSH to inform you that Alonzo has obtained my permiſſion to correſpond with me. Of the terms on which, and the reaſons why, I have granted this requeſt, you will ſee a full account in the incloſed letter. I fear I have acted imprudently;

ly; yet what could I do? Had I obſtinately refuſed my conſent, he might have been driven to deſpair, and might have embittered the evening of an aged parent's life, whilſt his innocent ſiſter would have been reduced to a ſituation truly forlorn; and I, when it was too late, ſhould have regretted the ſtep which I had taken. However this affair may terminate, I ſhall have the comfort of knowing that I acted in that manner which to my weak judgement appeared the beſt. Do, write to me immediately; and if you cannot approve the conduct, at leaſt pity the ſituation, of your

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

DONNA LAURA *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

LOVE frequently, on its firſt appearance, aſſumes the maſk of friendſhip. Even then the diſguiſe is eaſily penetrated. But when love has once appeared in its proper colours, and only aſſumes the maſk of friendſhip

ſhip in the hour when its hopes are on the point of deſtruction, then the deception *may*, nay, *muſt*, be viſible to every obſerver, however ſuperficial. Friendſhip has often brightened into love; but love has ſeldom, if ever, ſunk into friendſhip. O, Iſabella, what could tempt you to ſign the raſh promiſe? You regret the want of adviſers: Where was your faithful Alberto when you took the precipitate ſtep? You cannot in this inſtance obtain the approbation, but you will always poſſeſs the pity and the friendſhip, of

LAURA.

LETTER

LFTTERR XXX.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

YOUR letter has this inſtant reached me. You cannot conceive how it has hurt me, as I am ſure my conduct muſt have been highly culpable to have occaſioned ſo ſevere a letter from my Laura.

You blame me for not conſulting Alberto. He, alas! good man, is gone to Madrid. But my ſtate of mind has for ſome time been ſo agitated as to baniſh every idea I could wiſh to have retained. Had he been here, reſt aſſured I had never taken even a ſtep of much leſs importance than that alluded to without his ſanction. I am ſo dejected that I can ſcarcely refrain from tears. Adieu, dear Laura. Believe me

Ever yours,

ISABELLA.

LETTER XXXI.

DONNA LUCINDA DE GONZARA *to* DON ALONZO.

KNOW, deteſted man, vengeance is now within my reach; and if I neglect the bright opportunity, may Heaven curſe me. I prepare you for the blow only to increaſe your puniſhment by the horrors of anticipation.

anticipation.——Feel them and tremble.

THAT affection with which (unworthy as you are) I once honoured you, is now changed into a hatred that ſhall purſue you (if poſſible) beyond the grave:——it ſhall at leaſt conduct you thither. Nothing but your death can ſatiate the revenge of a ſlighted woman.

LETTER XXXII.

DONNA LUCINDA *to* DON JOHN DUKE OF ARANDINA.

DON JOHN,

SOME time ago, as a young man of the name of Caſtina was travelling near the Caſtle of Villarea, being attacked by robbers, he eſcaped (though not unhurt) into the

the groves of Villarea. There he found your niece, who conducted him to the gardener's lodge, where he remained till healed of his wounds. During his confinement, he was conſtantly viſited by your niece Donna Iſabella; who, the day of his departure, favoured him with a private interview——when they exchanged the moſt ſolemn vows of perpetual attachment. Theſe facts I had from your gardener, who was himſelf working in the grove at the time. Now Don Alonzo is under an engagement to marry me; and I am ſure you would not wiſh your niece ſhould wrong any woman, ſo as to rob her of a contracted huſband. I therefore hope you will forbid him

to continue his addreſſes. You will eaſily procure ſome other huſband for your niece, and will render a great ſervice to your well-wiſher

LUCINDA DE GONZARA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

DUKE OF ARANDINA *in reply.*

WOMAN,

IF he be not ſent to the *mines* as a reward due to his uncommon preſumption, you may enjoy your fellow unrivalled by the niece of

DON JOHN DUKE OF ARANDINA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

DON ALONZO *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

SURE Hell contains no fiend equal to a ſlighted female! The truth of this aſſertion is fully proved by the incloſed letter: but as her malice cannot deprive me of Iſabella, I have little to dread from her

her threats. Her former attempt has made me cautious how I venture abroad alone or unarmed.——To-morrow I ſet out for Corſeyda, where I ſhall have the happineſs of being within a league of Villarea; and where, with all impatience, I ſhall expect the bleſſing of a line from my Iſabella.

ALONZO DE CASTINA.

LETTER XXXV.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DON ALONZO.

I HAVE juſt received your letter, and own that the contents have occaſioned ſome painful ſenſations in my breaſt. Our ſex, however amiable they often are, however tender their feelings, yet, when ſlighted, ſeldom fail to revenge themſelves, and

and that in the moſt cruel manner. You will do well to keep within your own territories, as there alone you will be in ſafety.

THE Duke and Father Alberto return to-morrow. I expect the arrival of the good Alberto, my kind counſellor, with much anxiety. Had he not been abſent, you would probably never have prevailed on me to ſubſcribe myſelf

Yours, &c.

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

TO-MORROW the Duke and good Alberto return. I have now remained here in ſolitude a whole month. Oh that that month had been paſſed at the dear convent of Ventina!

Ventina! for then Alonzo would never have triumphed over my prudence. He, it is true, at preſent correſponds ſolely as a friend; but I fear he will embrace the firſt opportunity to lay aſide the diſguiſe which he has been forced to aſſume, and will appear once more as my lover. I have, I fear, gone too far to retreat. Do, direct me. How I long for the arrival of good Alberto! I will tell him all, and then let him direct my future conduct. O how I long for to-morrow!——Adieu. Believe me

Ever yours,

ISABELLA.

LETTER XXXVII.

FATHER ALBERTO *to* DONNA LAURA.

AT the requeſt of your Iſabella, I have taken up my pen, to communicate to you every circumſtance relating to her preſent misfortune. Laſt night the Duke returned, and retired to his apartment without

without any thing remarkable in his conduct. But this morning he ordered all the ſervants to attend him in the great hall; when, producing a letter from a woman of the name of Gonzara (the woman who endeavoured to procure the aſſaſſination of Alonzo), he obliged the gardener to read it aloud. It contained a full account of Alonzo's rencounter with Iſabella in the grove, as well as of the parting ſcene which took place in my abſence. This account, ſhe ſaid, was communicated to her by the gardener; who now threw himſelf on his knees, and implored the Duke's pardon for having concealed the affair from his knowledge. No ſooner was the Duke convinced that

his information was well founded, than his appearance ceaſed to be human. The man was inſtantly diſmiſſed for having concealed from the Duke what, for a few dollars, he had communicated to Gonzara. Poor Iſabella, during this ſcene, had ſwooned. Happily every attempt to recover her proved ineffectual; ſo that ſhe was inſenſible of the abuſe with which ſhe was loaded by the Duke. I intreated the Duke to be leſs violent; aſſuring him that I had been the adviſer of Iſabella through the whole of the affair, at leaſt as far as related to receiving Alonzo when wounded, and to procuring a proper attendance to be paid to him during his illneſs. Adding, at

the

the ſame time, that illuſtrious as was the houſe of Arandina, it muſt ever receive additional luſtre from acts of mercy and benevolence; and that no ſtation, however exalted, could exempt us from the duties which we owe to our fellow-pilgrims in the vale of tears. To this the Duke replied, that I was the firſt perſon who had ever propoſed to convert his gardener's lodge into an infirmary for all rogues who happened to quarrel on his eſtate; and that both his niece and I were very much to blame for the part we had acted. I ſaid, Whatever might be the errors of Iſabella, I was ſure they would, on inquiry, prove to be thoſe of the head, and not of the heart; and that

the former were very excuſable in people of her age, and who, like her, were totally unacquainted with the cuſtoms of the world. He at length became a little pacified, permitted Iſabella to be removed, and poſtponed any farther inquiry till to-morrow;——when you ſhall hear more from,

Madam,

Your very obedient ſervant,

ALBERTO.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

FATHER ALBERTO *to the ſame.*

THE illneſs of your friend is this day conſiderably increaſed; ſhe is now very feveriſh, and I fear in great danger; ſhe is not yet delirious; but weeps inceſſantly; and ſighs out the name of Laura. Her love

love for you is, indeed, very great; and ſhe is well worthy of that affection which we both entertain for her; ſhe is certainly an angel in fleſh and blood. Much as ſhe now ſuffers from his treachery, ſhe has inſiſted on my carrying the gardener thirty dollars, that he and his family may not ſuffer want on their diſmiſſion from the Duke's ſervice: For, ſaid ſhe, though he has greatly injured me, and betrayed the truſt I repoſed in him; yet, perhaps, he was in want of money, and could not withſtand the proffered bribe. At any rate, his *family* are innocent; and *they* will be greatly diſtreſſed till he is able to procure ſome employment. Thus does ſhe practice that important

tant duty ſo inculcated by the great Author of our faith. How bright is the example ſhe affords! and how few will endeavour to imitate ſuch an original! She has ſent for me. I muſt, therefore, ceaſe to deſcant on a ſubject ſo truly pleaſing to him,

Who is, Madam, with reſpect,

Your obedient ſervant,

ALBERTO.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I HAVE the pleaſure to inform you that our amiable friend is ſomewhat better. She this day gave me an account of her whole conduct: She has preſerved the copies of all Alonzo's letters and her anſwers.

The

The original letters of Alonzo are, ſhe ſays, in your poſſeſſion, as well as her anſwers. Had Iſabella been more verſed in the ways of the world, ſhe would certainly not have permitted Alonzo to correſpond with her. But how few are there whoſe lives are marked with a ſingle imprudence, and that of no very ſerious nature!

At her requeſt, I communicated her letters and thoſe of Alonzo to the Duke, who rayed like a madman. He recounted all his anceſtors for thirty generations; called on them to pour down vengeance on the head of their diſgraceful deſcendant, the amiable Iſabella; vowed eternal

eternal vengeance to Alonzo, for whom he ſent a meſſenger requiring his immediate attendance. In vain did I endeavour to place the conduct of Iſabella in the moſt favourable point of view; in vain did I obſerve that ſhe diſcouraged all hopes in the breaſt of Alonzo. He ſtill continued to rave at Iſabella, till on the arrival of Alonzo his fury took another courſe. No ſooner did this unfortunate youth appear, than he loaded him with every poſſible inſult, and at laſt ſtruck him. On this, Alonzo drew his ſword, but happily was diſarmed by the attendants. The Duke now ordered his hands to be tied; and producing his patent of creation, read it aloud to Alonzo. In it were

enumerated thirty titles of honour; and amongſt others, the Earldom of Joppa, Viſcount Mount Sinai, and Baron Capernaum, granted to his anceſtor by Godfrey de Boulogne King of Jeruſalem.

He now aſked Alonzo, how the ſon of a merchant could *preſume* to offer himſelf to a daughter of the houſe of Arandina in any higher capacity than that of a lackey? Told him, that, if ever he was found within his territories, he would ſecure him an appointment in the mines; and then diſmiſſed him. Alonzo retired vowing vengeance; whilſt I uſed all my art to diſſuade the Duke

from viſiting the poor Iſabella; and happily I ſucceeded. He is now gone to vent is fury in the grove. That he may there recover his reaſon, is the ſincereſt wiſh of,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

ALBERTO.

LETTER

LETTER XL.

From the ſame to the ſame.

ISABELLA has at length been pardoned by the Duke, after having received a great deal of what he calls wholeſome advice. The terms on which he has conſented to pardon her, and to which ſhe has

acceded, are theſe: That ſhe ſhall never more ſee or correſpond with Alonzo; that ſhe ſhall in two months retire to Ventina; and at the end of her probationary year, ſhall aſſume the veil.

Poor girl! I pity her ſincerely; for ſhe is really attached to Alonzo, and he ſeems equally partial to her. I hope to prevail with the Duke to mitigate her ſentence, and that he will not drive an amiable woman to a perpetual ſecluſion from a world which ſhe would adorn by her ſplendid virtues. Heaven never hears with approbation the vows of involuntary victims. In that claſs I muſt rank

Iſabella,

Iſabella, as love poſſeſſes too great a portion of her heart to admit of her becoming a good nun. She may, like Heloiſe, retire to a cloiſter; but love will erect an altar in her cell, whilſt her ſighs will ever fan the deſtructive flame.

To your prayers, Madam, I ſhall now recommend her; whilſt I remain,

With reſpect, Yours, &c.

ALBERTO.

LETTER XLI.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

SINCE Heaven has for wiſe and good reaſons prolonged my life, I hope there is yet ſome mercy in ſtore for your Iſabella. The good

Alberto

Alberto has by this time informed you of all that has befallen me within theſe few days. The obligations I owe him are unſpeakable. Heaven reward him! I never can. You know the terms on which I have procured my pardon; and you pity me. Adieu, deareſt Laura, I am too feeble to write more.

Good God, how wretched is your

ISABELLA!

THIS letter is languid as my waſted frame.

O

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

DON ALONZO *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

O ISABELLA, that for one moment I could forget that I adore you!——But, ſtop, he is the uncle of my Iſabella;—he ſhall live.

Juſt

Juſt Heaven, what did I not ſuffer on that ever-to-be-remembered day! ——The bare recollection diſtracts me. I hear you are not well. For pity's ſake, write to me. Tell me how you do; tell me who betrayed the ſecret of our correſpondence. How I pant for vengeance! But Iſabella ſtill ſhall direct the conduct of

ALONZO.

P. S. When my ſword was levelled at his breaſt, why was I diſappointed of my revenge? Curſe on the hated tyrant.——But whither am I hurrying? I write nonſenſe.—I am mad with rage.—If he preſume to inſult my Iſabella,

by

by Heaven he dies. Oh, Iſabella, I can write no more. It is my *ſword*, and not my *pen*, I wiſh to wield.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DON ALONZO.

I HAVE juft received your letter, which to me was totally unintelligible. I was ignorant of your ever having feen the Duke. The

kind Alberto, unwilling to increaſe my pain, had concealed from me that fatal interview to which your letter alludes. I do not wonder that you were exaſperated: ſuch treatment no one could bear. It was unmerited; it was unjuſt in the laſt extreme. But yet, my Alonzo, when vengeance lifts her ſword and points it at the breaſt of Don John, let the tears of Iſabella avert the blow.—Oh! Alonzo, you can give me no proof of that affection you profeſs for me—ſo real, ſo pleaſing, ſo generous,—as by pardoning Don John. O ever bear in mind that he is the ſole earthly protector of that Iſabella whom you profeſs to adore.

I am poor—Never till now did I wiſh for wealth—yet if I poſſeſſed it, I would not injure thy generous ſoul by the offer. No! the only bribe I will ever propoſe as the reward of your forbearance—is my friendſhip; —*that* is the ſole offering I can make at the ſhrine of your injured honour. Oh! may it be deemed ſufficient; ſo ſhall you ever poſſeſs the eſteem of

ISABELLA.

LETTER XLIV.

DON ALONZO *in reply.*

MY preſent bliſs is too great to laſt. Offered the friendſhip of Iſabella!—Is that *valued*, that envied, treaſure to be mine at laſt?

Vengeance! no, by Heaven, he ſhall experience none from me; he ſhall live: but to you he is indebted for the prolongation of his days—deteſted tyrant! Oh, Iſabella, my gratitude ſhall be laſting as my life. I can write no more; I am drunk with joy. Believe me to be, with ſincereſt gratitude,

Your devoted ſlave,

ALONZO.

LETTER XLIV.

DONNA ISABELLA *to* DONNA LAURA.

ALL my apprehenſions for the ſafety of the Duke being removed by the promiſe Alonzo has given me not to take vengeance on him

him for his conduct at the Caſtle, I ſhall now expreſs to my Laura the fears I entertain concerning my future happineſs. Oh, my Laura, how little do we ſhort-ſighted mortals know what will be conducive to our happineſs! The time was when I thought that no event (however gloomy in its appearance) could be deemed unfortunate, if it was the occaſion of my returning to Ventina and to you. But, ah! how changed are all my ſentiments! How often have I wearied Heaven with prayers that I might return to Ventina! *now* the mention of thoſe walls fills my mind with horror. Why this wonderful change? Is Laura

leſs beloved than before? No, *that* is impoſſible.—Is Iſabella leſs enamoured of virtue than ſhe once was? She hopes not.—Is her heart a ſtranger to love? Ah, no! *that* is the ſad truth—Alonzo is beloved. Within Ventina's walls he never muſt appear; yet Villarea is not more *propitious* to his wiſhes than Ventina. But the ſolemn vow I ſo ſoon muſt make, chills my blood with horror. Have mercy on me, Heaven. Oh! how my heart throbs! Adieu, dear Laura. Sympathiſe with

Your

ISABELLA.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

DONNA LAURA *to* DONNA ISABELLA.

LAURA cannot relieve, but ſhe ſincerely ſympathiſes with, her dear Iſabella. How cruel, how truly

truly deteſtable is her uncle! What ſays the good Alberto to theſe proceedings? He cannot approve them! No one can refrain from pouring the ſevereſt cenſures on ſuch horrid conduct. Heavens! how I deteſt that tyrant.

Oh, Iſabella, that I could but mitigate your pains! Your apartments here are beſpoke. The Lady Abbeſs ſpeaks of you in the kindeſt manner; but ſincerely regrets your preſent return,—as it is ſo contrary to your wiſhes.

MAY you, my dear friend, when you revifit theſe walls, regain your long-loſt peace. Adieu. Believe me ever

Yours unalterably,

LAURA.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.